

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
December 16, 2013**

**APPROVED**

**5151 Marsh Road, Okemos, MI 48864-1198  
853-4000, Town Hall Room, 7:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Commissioners Cordill (7:01 P.M.), Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Jackson,  
Norkin, Salehi, Scott-Craig  
ABSENT: None  
STAFF: Principal Planner Gail Oranchak

**1. Call meeting to order**

Chair Jackson called the regular meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**2. Approval of agenda**

**Commissioner Scott-Craig moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Hildebrandt.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Commissioner Ianni moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2013. Seconded by Commissioner Scott-Craig.**

VOICE VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

**4. Public Remarks**

Chair Jackson opened the floor for public remarks.

Susan Simkin, 2032 Central Park Drive, Okemos, stated her continued opposition to several components of SUP #13121, a project to locate the new central fire station on Central Park Drive.

Lawrence Nolan, 4765 Nakoma Drive, Okemos, attorney for the Autumn Park Condominium owners, voiced his ongoing objections to placement of the central fire station on Township property located on Central Park Drive.

David Strobl, 1320 Cove Court, Okemos, offered information from the National Institutes of Health website on environmental noise pollution and acute noise exposure relative to SUP #13121. He expressed his continued objection to placement of the new central fire station at the proposed location on Central Park Drive.

Chair Jackson closed public remarks.

**5. Communications**

A. Brent Forsberg , President, T. A. Forsberg, 2422 Jolly Road, Suite 200, Okemos; RE: SUP #13161 (MSU Federal Credit Union)

B. Supervisor Elizabeth LeGoff; Invitation for Planning Commissioners to attend a Joint Meeting with the Township Board on January 7, 2014

**6. Public hearings**

- A. Mixed Use Planned Unit Development #13054 (Aldi/Eyde), request for a mixed use planned unit development with one commercial building and 24 apartments at 5155 Marsh Road and
- B. Special Use Permit #13171 (Aldi/Eyde), request to construct a group of buildings greater than 25,000 square feet in gross floor area at 5155 Marsh Road

Chair Jackson opened the public hearings at 7:19 P.M.

- Introduction by the Chair (announcement of procedures, time limits and protocols for public participation and applicants)
- Summary of subject matter  
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the mixed use planned unit development (MUPUD) and special use permit (SUP) requests as outlined in staff memoranda dated December 13, 2013.
- Applicant  
Mark Clouse, Eyde Co., 4660 S. Hagadorn, Suite 660, East Lansing, noted the proposed development will be managed by staff at Central Park Apartments, and residents will have use of the pool, clubhouse, tennis courts, etc. at Central Park Apartments. He indicated the back elevation of the residential building closest to the wetland shows a basement level with lookout windows which precludes the necessity for a large retaining wall across the entire site. Mr. Clouse added pedestrian access from the seven foot pathway along Marsh Road was discussed during a prior meeting when this site was initially approved in order to allow individuals a way to have direct access to Central Park from Marsh Road through the middle of the site. He stated the overall site is similar to the initial layout previously approved. Mr. Clouse noted Aldi is working with the Ingham County Road Department (ICRD) to obtain a traffic signal at Marsh and Time Square. He added ICRD made a curb cut when Marsh Road was reconstructed in 2013. Mr. Clouse indicated Aldi plans to reduce the bicycle pathway elevation to provide for greater visibility.

David Kapusansky, Director of Real Estate, Aldi, 2625 N. Stockbridge Road, Webberville, explained Aldi's business plan is to remain small while offering the best value at the lowest price. He noted Aldi has earned LEED ratings for its standard store design which includes a closed-in dock for minimal noise. Mr. Kapusansky listed freon management, building management systems, recycling and limited hours (9:00 AM to 8:00 PM) as part of Aldi's corporate responsibility initiative and to increase efficiency. He spoke to Aldi's willingness to extend the water "loop" around the building to incorporate the Nokomis Learning Center and a walking path with special supported turf for emergency vehicle usage.

Chris Grzenkowicz, Desine Inc., 2183 Pless Drive. Brighton, distributed a supplemental packet which contained additional information regarding Aldi (i.e., revised landscaping plan, bicycle racks, bicycle rack placement, use of materials around the perimeter of the building, etc.)

- Public  
Todd Wilson, Chair, Park Commission, 1897 Wilder Street, expressed concern the design of the proposed development does not provide sufficient screenage for the Meridian Historic Village and will offer a non-historic distraction for Meridian residents who visit the village. He questioned placement of the secondary egress and believed a more sensible pathway into the park exists if that is the intent for usage.

George Grettenberger, Board Chair, Friends of Historic Meridian, 1931 Osage, Okemos, voiced concern with preserving the historic heritage of Meridian Township and believed the proposed development, as presented, may detract from the historical experience of the numerous children's groups which visit the village each year.

Brook Thompson, 1513 Downing Street, Haslett, expressed concern with the additional traffic which will result from the proposed development. She spoke to her assumption that the light at Marsh Road and Times Square will be on demand. She requested consideration of a sequenced light at Tihart and Marsh Road as well due to increased vehicular traffic which will result from the proposed development.

Mr. Clouse added that during the previous process for a project on this site, Township staff recommended and suggested the applicant connect up and after hearing concerns at tonight's meeting, he would like to meet with the Director of Parks and Recreation on how best to remove "points of access" to walk to Nokomis and Historical Village. He added the intersection of Tihart and Marsh Roads does not warrant a traffic signal, but the light at Times Square will be sequenced with others along Marsh Road.

- Planning Commission discussion:

Commissioner Cordill inquired if the applicant had considered the vacant grocery store at Marsh and Haslett Roads.

Mr. Kapusansky responded the Village Square location was considered, but discarded due to its percentage of current vacant stores and lack of proximity to the most common shopping sites in the Township in order to gain volume and provide lower prices.

Commissioner Cordill believed the applicant would attract more customers in that area as well as a Carriage Hills location due to lack of nearby grocery stores.

Mr. Kapusansky did not believe there was a large enough draw in those areas, as they considered a two to three mile ring around the two aforementioned sites.

Commissioner Honicky spoke to the proposal being within the floodway and floodway fringe, noting Building A is substantially above most of the floodway fringe. He expressed concern with Building B as the plan denotes it is 843 feet above mean sea level. Commissioner Honicky stated he cannot support the project with Building B only having the ability to successfully accommodate six (6) inches of water.

Commissioner Ianni – asked the applicant is there was risk of Building B flooding, as the application did not request a permit for work in the floodplain.

Mr. Clouse responded that no building is in the floodplain and the floodplain and floodway elevations have been redelineated in recent years by Federal Emergency Manager Agency (FEMA). He added the elevations are determined by FEMA and are 2-1/2 feet above mean sea level and no additional permits are required.

Commissioner Ianni stated store hours of 9:00 a.m. until 8:00 PM will miss a large portion of morning commuter traffic.

Commissioner Scott-Craig stated the Meridian Health Impact Assessment in the packet filled out by Aldi showed a positive response to the question of whether the project was located in a known floodplain.

Mr. Clouse clarified that a floodplain exists on the 5.4 acre site.

Commissioner Hildebrandt inquired if the applicant is looking for a side and rear yard waiver for Building B from 100 feet to 42.48.

Mr. Clouse responded that it is not a wetland setback requirement, but 100 feet from residential. He believed Planning Commissioners realize the purpose of the 100 foot setback is if there a residential community adjacent to the proposed project.

Commissioner Salehi asked for staff clarification on the 100 foot waiver from the edge of the property.

Principal Planner Oranchak answered commercial properties adjacent to residential zoning are required to have a 100 foot setback or 60 feet if a double row of evergreen trees are put in place. She believed in this case, the setback should be waived based on the Township ordinance.

Commissioner Hildebrandt stated that her understanding of the MUPUD ordinance uses the setback waiver to enable placemaking and believed those setbacks may need to be revisited.

Commissioner Ianni inquired if the applicant chose the layout of the development based on the wetlands and floodplain to the north.

Mr. Grzenkowicz responded the idea behind the proposed layout is to utilize the portion of the property which is furthest away from the wetlands and floodplain while allowing the natural area to be preserved. He stated all the proposed improvements are outside of the floodplain, wetland and wetland buffer zone and requires utilization of property closer to the property lines. Mr. Grzenkowicz pointed out the 100 foot setback is to residential zoning (which is what the park is zoned), but is not a residential use.

Commissioner Scott-Craig noted the Township property to the south houses the Nokomis Learning Center, which is a park use, museum use and community meeting use. He stated the applicant has proposed only six (6) feet of setback from some of the parking spaces. Commissioner Scott-Craig believed too much is being proposed on this site and offered his preference for the building to be placed on the front of the site with parking behind. He spoke to the proposed immediate land split upon approval and believed the MUPUD ordinance is being used to gain access to the waiver.

Commissioner Deits suggested moving the southeast parking spaces to the north in an effort to remove them off the property line and allow substantial landscaping, while acknowledging that doing so will require a sacrifice of seven (7) or eight (8) parking spaces overall.

Commissioner Deits inquired who decides how this project interfaces with adjoining Township lands.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the proposal was reviewed by the Director of Community Planning and Development and the Engineering and the Fire Departments, none of which raised questions about the location of the two access drives.

Commissioner Deits inquired as to how the proposed project should be integrated into the use of Township property.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that seven (7) feet is the Township standard width for the Township's pedestrian bicycle pathways.

Commissioner Deits inquired as to the necessity of monuments being placed at 20 foot wetland setback line on the north side of the building to prevent landscaping encroachment into the wetlands.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the current ordinance allows for encroachment in the first 20 feet to provide the ability to plant and mow grass. She noted the 20 feet closest to the wetland must remain in its natural state.

Commissioner Salehi believed the proposed use of mixed retail and residential was desirable and one purpose of a MUPUD. He expressed an interest in being provided architectural renderings to visually ascertain how the view would look from the Nokomis Learning Center.

Mr. Grzenkowicz explained the six (6) foot setback in question is for only a portion of the parking. He explained the view through use of the building material samples.

Commissioner Salehi inquired if waivers are required for the setback from the Nokomis Learning Center property.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the applicant can base their site plan on waivers being granted.

Commissioner Salehi inquired as to the distance between the south property line and the building.

Mr. Grzenkowicz responded the property line is on an angle but the closest distance is 20.03 feet.

Commissioner Salehi requested information on how the property east and north of the Nokomis Learning Center is used.

Commissioner Salehi inquired if basements are a requirement in residential apartment buildings.

Principal Planner responded they are not.

Commissioner Salehi indicated all the buildings have a fairly low square footage of windows.

Mr. Kapusansky responded he did not realize until today that there is flexibility in the percentage of windows, adding the proposed plan provides a prototypical window set up. He explained that shelving needs to be taken into consideration along the perimeter of the building as well as two (2) bathrooms, a break room and storage area along the exterior wall.

Commissioner Salehi inquired if there will be skylights in the interior of the building.

Mr. Kapusansky responded there will not be skylights in the store.

Commissioner Salehi reviewed a recent Aldi's circular and noted with interest that the company sells products other than groceries on a regular basis.

Mr. Kapusansky replied Aldi's stocks 1,400 grocery oriented products and provides "special buys" on either a weekly or bi-weekly basis which creates excitement and allows the company to expand its product range to supply customer needs across a larger base.

Commissioner Hildebrandt requested an explanation about information contained in the packet that the building height is proposed to be 35 feet, but one of the requests is to waive the added setback requirement for each one foot of height over 35 feet.

Mr. Grzenkowicz clarified that there was a misunderstanding on their part prior to the pre-application meeting with Planning and they will not need the requested waiver.

Commissioner Hildebrandt requested an explanation regarding the land division after construction as it appears to be a way around the MUPUD.

Mr. Grzenkowicz explained the land division will be requested as a way to handle ownership of the property. He added Aldi prefers to buy into a community so it was that desire to own the property v. leasing which lead to the land division. Mr. Grzenkowicz stated Aldi is required to legally bind the properties together in order for the MUPUD to remain in place.

Commissioner Hildebrandt believed Building B infringes on the priority conservation corridor.

Mr. Clouse the applicant has followed the greenspace in its form through the entire Mud Lake Drain wetland area.

Commissioner Hildebrandt requested communication from either the Park Commission or Environmental Commission on whether the priority conservation corridor is impacted.

Commissioner Hildebrandt asked who pays for reconstruction of the sidewalk.

Mr. Clouse responded the developer is responsible.

Commissioner Hildebrandt inquired as to why only eight (8) of the eleven (11) required street trees are being provided.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded this is a preliminary plan and the number of trees will be ascertained during final site plan review.

Commissioner Hildebrandt asked how the square footage of the proposed small grocery store compares to Tom's Food Store, Foods for Living and East Lansing Food Coop.

Mr. Clouse believed Tom's to be 30,000 to 40,000 square feet and Foods for Living to be approximately 27,000 square feet.

Commissioner Ianni agreed with a fellow Commissioner that the area needs to be made walkable and not be overcrowded, adding a critical component of the MUPUD is to integrate the residential with the commercial area. He believed having the apartments on the proposed site allows access to Aldi, WalMart, and adjacent shopping and promotes infill in the commercial area.

Commissioner Deits understood the windows refer to only the east side of the building (side which faces Marsh Road) and the Township's ordinance requires 50% of the façade on that side to be windows.

Commissioner Honicky addressed the 40 foot wetland setback and a 20 foot wetland buffer in the back. He asked if the placement of Building B appeared to be on the thick line which is the 100 year flood boundary.

Principal Planner Oranchak clarified the wetland setback is not based on elevation, but distance from the wetland boundary itself.

Mr. Clouse added the building floor will be constructed 2-½ feet above the floodplain and will not necessarily follow the slope of the land as it currently exists through fill.

Commissioner Norkin expressed appreciation that the developer wishes to engage in discussions with the Parks Department to address potential concerns. He believed the proposed development is not in sync with the historic character of the village and must include a "massive" barrier.

Commissioner Deits pointed to the west side of the building where there is unused and undeveloped park land and asked if the Park Commission would entertain the possibility of encouraging the developer to place landscaping on public land west of the property line to provide additional screening.

Principal Planner Oranchak reminded Commissioners that applicant's cannot be required to make off-site improvements.

Mr. Grzenkowicz explained the height of the Aldi building is 17 feet, while the residential component is 35 feet in height.

Chair Jackson expressed concern with integration between the residential component and grocery store as she did not see enhanced walkability. She inquired as to where the Village at Market Square sign would be located. She asked for a better understanding of the intent to have the MUPUD proposal approved and then seek a land split which divides the mixed uses.

Mr. Clouse stated there will be a separate sign for residential and will be included on the next plan to come before the Planning Commission. He stated the typical MUPUD was considered (small amount of retail with floors of residential above), but concern was expressed about the viability of such a small retail space at the proposed location. He believed this “horizontal” mixed use is the proper approach for the proposed site. Since Aldi historically prefers to own their sites, Mr. Clouse stated this layout was chosen to facilitate their purchase while maintaining the MUPUD status.

Chair Jackson asked if it was possible to improve the movement of individuals from the pedestrian bicycle pathway and residents across the parking lot to the grocery store.

Mr. Clouse responded the pathway was placed as such to avoid interference with the driveway. He indicated a marked walkway could be placed so that residents could walk up and walk directly across, acknowledging that people will take the shortest distance regardless.

Chair Jackson asked for the definition of a warranted signal.

Mr. Clouse explained the process to meet the warrants through demonstration that turning movements and traffic counts at a specific location are being met. The traffic study by Traffic Engineering Associates, Inc. (TEA) indicates the current volumes of traffic warrant the signal at Marsh Road and Times Square.

Chair Jackson asked if a warranted signal means the Ingham County Road Department (ICRD) will place a signal at Marsh Road and Times Square.

Mr. Clouse stated the ICRD has to review traffic signal plans and approve the signal which will be paid for by the developer.

Mr. Kapusansky added that his initial discussions with Bob Peterson from the ICRD all indicate a permit will be issued upon submission of proper traffic signal plans.

Chair Jackson asked how a land split would change the relationship of the entire property to the MUPUD requirements.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the entire property is under the MUPUD conditions, and both parcels would be considered as one project relative to the MUPUD and any future changes.

Chair Jackson inquired as to why the canopy is being proposed as an amenity since Aldi includes canopies as part of its business model.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded canopies are included in the list of amenities within the Township’s MUPUD ordinance.

Commissioner Hildebrandt expounded that the purpose of amenities within the MUPUD is to ask for something “extra” in return for exceptions. She voiced concern that approval of the MUPUD allows for the land division to proceed.



Chair Jackson stated the property currently houses two light poles and inquired if there are underground utilities on the site.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded in the negative. She clarified that a house was previously located on the property and when it was moved, the utility lines were removed as well.

Commissioner Salehi suggested moving the store to the east farther away from the Nokomis Center.

Mr. Kapusansky stated from a development and design standpoint, parking should be as close to the front entrance of the building as possible. He believed there would be a larger impact on the Nokomis Learning Center if the building was moved to the front of the site and the parking was placed next to the Nokomis property. He noted the driveway has to be located across from Times Square.

Commissioner Salehi asked if the applicant had considered a landscape screen which blocked the building from the south side as an amenity.

Mr. Kapusansky responded he is open to discussion on different types of landscaping and/or additional landscaping.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired as to the location of outdoor seating and gathering areas for both residential and retail uses.

Mr. Kapusansky outlined those designated locations for Planning Commission review.

Commissioner Cordill believed the driver for the requested waivers is setback requirements for the grocery store. She inquired if the apartment building which faces Marsh Road will receive a setback waiver.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the setback for Marsh Road is 100 feet from the center line of Marsh Road. She offered an explanation on the rationale for the proposed setbacks for the Aldi building on the west and south sides.

Mr. Kapusansky pointed to the proposed setbacks for the various buildings on the overhead, noting the 94-foot variance is only for the section where parking is six (6) feet from the property line. He suggested reducing the length of the parking space to 18 feet which would provide an additional two feet to the setbacks. Mr. Kapusansky stated the apartment building in question which faces Marsh Road is approximately 20 feet beyond the required setback.

Principal Planner Oranchak added parking dimensions are not subject to a waiver, but must be requested through a variance. She noted that if the parking space length is reduced to 18 feet, it must be ten (10) feet in width.

Commissioner Ianni believed the Planning Commission should not punish a business for being a responsible corporate citizen by providing specific amenities in all of its stores. He believed a business should be rewarded for such an effort. He addressed the pilot program for LED lighting in another location within the state and believed the applicant is complying with the spirit of the Township's ordinance relative to amenities. Commissioner Ianni addressed the issue of ownership by stating the identity of the owners is not important as the Planning Commission is approving a MUPUD on this parcel for this district, not just a single owner.

Commissioner Deits asked for applicant reaction to the comment that the lighting poles are in excess of the Township's allowable height standard.

Mr. Kapusansky responded that, as proposed, lighting poles meet the Township's ordinance for both the residential and commercial development. He stated that as pole height is reduced, more poles need to be added to meet the Township's lighting ordinance for proper illumination in all parking lots. He added the discussion about 15-foot light poles in the ordinance is for areas designated for pedestrian walkways along sidewalks, mainly through subdivisions.

Commissioner Deits suggested east-west striping to the east of Building A where the walkway comes off Marsh Road. He noted for the applicant's understanding that bicycle racks are a requirement, but that covered bicycle racks are considered an amenity.

Commissioner Scott-Craig stated he did not believe the proposed signs comply with the Township's sign ordinance.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded that for a MUPUD, the applicant provides the signing program for the site as part of the proposal. She stated the purpose of providing a sign program is to integrate signs into the design of the MUPUD.

Commissioner Hildebrandt inquired if the building material for the apartment buildings would be complementary to the building material for the Aldi store.

Mr. Kapusansky responded in the affirmative.

Chair Jackson inquired about the reinforced turf pavers to be used in such a way to provide a path for emergency vehicles.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the path will be 20 feet wide to allow emergency vehicles to access the site.

Chair Jackson asked for confirmation that fire and public safety personnel had reviewed the emergency access plans and had no objections.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Kapusansky added the idea was to place the sidewalk down the center to give a guide for emergency vehicles to follow. He noted the proposed layout prevents individuals from pulling into the parking lot next door and using the emergency access as a shortcut on the site.

Commissioner Scott-Craig recommended the applicant look at that issue carefully during discussions with the Park Commission as the emergency access goes into the parking lot behind the Nokomis Learning Center. He believed it to be problematic during the Farmers' Market season.

Commissioner Cordill asked to view the elevation of the apartment buildings. She suggested incorporating some of the brick used in the Aldi building into the apartment buildings for a cohesive development.

Mr. Clouse stated it is his intent to have a cohesive development and he would work with that suggestion.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearings at 9:27 P.M.

- C. Special Use Permit #13161 (MSU Federal Credit Union), request to construct a credit union branch with two drive-through ATM lanes and four drive-through teller lanes on the northeast corner of Jolly Road and Jolly Oak Road

Chair Jackson opened the public hearing at 9:27 P.M.

- Summary of subject matter  
Principal Planner Oranchak summarized the SUP request as outlined in staff memorandum dated December 12, 2013.
- Applicant  
Greg McKenzie, Vice, President, Daniels and Zermack Architects, 2080 South State Street, Ann Arbor, explained the layout of the project, noting the applicant has attempted to ensure the safety and access of the drive up facilities are maintained. He stated the 24-hour ATM machines were placed where they are most visible for both public safety and for the users, adding placement of the drive up lanes on the north side of the building in an effort for minimal visual impact from the public street but highly visible from within the site. Mr. McKenzie noted the secondary access/egress on Jolly Oak to the northwest assists in providing an egress to make a connection into Staybridge Suites to help alleviate traffic in and off public streets. He indicated the ATM canopy on the south has a screened wall with additional landscape to continue screening for headlights. Mr. McKenzie stated the applicant will be seeking a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for the necessary number of parking spaces based on need.
- Planning Commission discussion:  
Commissioner Deits requested clarification on what was before the Planning Commission.

Principal Planner Oranchak responded the proposed special use permit project is the branch bank with four attended drive-through lanes and two drive-through ATM lanes.

Commissioner Norkin asked if the applicant would consider significant additional landscaping throughout its development. With the ongoing energy crisis, he asked the applicant to consider alternatives to idling cars and wasting energy.

Mr. McKenzie responded landscaping would be consistent with that displayed at other MSU credit union locations.

Mr. Ianni noted that while it is a goal of the Planning Commission to make Meridian Township more walkable, there is a demand for drive-through windows, and business will satisfy that demand. He indicated that even with the additional requested parking, it will meet the 70% impervious surface requirement.

Commissioner Scott-Craig inquired about the proposed removal of the access drive from Meridian Crossing to the Staybridge Suites. Based on that assumption, he asked if all of the incoming traffic to the proposed site would be off of Meridian Crossing.

Mr. McKenzie stated that in conversation with the traffic engineers, that assumption may not necessarily be true, as Jolly-Oak can be utilized to use the north entrance. He noted some of the layout is dictated by the fact that drivers sit on the left side of their vehicles and must traverse through a drive-through lane in counterclockwise pattern.

Commissioner Scott-Craig believed the four attended ATM lanes would travel west and that would be the best placement for the connection to Jolly Oak Road.

Mr. McKenzie responded that would be optimal for direct access out of the drive-up windows, but the Ingham County Road Department (ICRD) would not allow that scenario, due to ongoing development to the west. He added the northerly parking which is screened will be staff parking which is directionally signed.

Patrick McPharlin, President and CEO, Michigan State Federal Credit Union (MSUFCU), 3777 West Road, East Lansing, clarified that MSU Federal Credit Union does not yet have an agreement with the other owners to eliminate the subject drive. He stated MSUFCU has been trying to reach an agreement for over six (6) months.

Commissioner Salehi asked the applicant if, assuming the driveway to Staybridge Suites remains, there has been an analysis conducted to address backup traffic blocking the drive to Staybridge Suites.

Mr. Mackenzie responded Township ordinances require three (3) parking spaces per lane and the applicant has proposed an additional bypass lane to the west.

Commissioner Salehi asked how the private road (Meridian Crossing) affects the proposed development.

Mr. McKenzie stated Meridian Crossing is part of the site condominium and, as one of the property owners, required to assist with the maintenance of that road as delineated in the condominium documents.

Commissioner Salehi asked if there was an option to eliminate the on-site fountain and route Staybridge drive through that area.

Mr. McKenzie responded he believed the fountain was designated as an amenity in the original condominium agreement.

Commissioner Salehi stated that banks with drive-through lanes generate significant trips and placement at the Jolly/Okemos Road intersection will make traffic worse.

Principal Planner Oranchak noted that issue was covered in the traffic study, and stated that the amount of trips would not be extraordinary. The traffic study also stated there was no way to mitigate for the additional traffic.

Commissioner Deits asked if the sidewalk “to nowhere” which comes off the fountain just terminates.

Mr. McKenzie explained there is a sidewalk which currently exists which goes north to the hotel.

Commissioner Deits expressed specific concern for pedestrians attempting to walk from/to the credit union from/to Starbucks as that area is a bottleneck.

Mr. McKenzie ensured Planning Commissioners that the radius will be properly engineered.

Commissioner Norkin believed the extended hours of the drive-through lanes will force the issue of long lines.

Commissioner Ianni added there is a walk-up ATM at the front of the building which could alleviate some backup.

Commissioner Cordill asked if there is a demand for four (4) drive-up lanes.

Mr. McKenzie responded in the affirmative, as the fourth lane assists with traffic flow and helps alleviate vehicle back-up.

Mr. McPharlin noted the fourth lane also shortens the wait time. He indicated the credit union also increases staff during busy times to reduce wait time.

Commissioner Honicky added that mothers with infants/small children are major users of drive-through lanes.

Mr. McPharlin noted disabled and elderly individuals also appreciate the drive-through lanes.

Chair Jackson closed the public hearing at 10:11P.M.

Chair Jackson recessed the meeting at 10:11 P.M.

Chair Jackson reconvened the meeting at 10:19 P.M.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

- A. Special Use Permit #13151 (Boggio), request to construct a Flagstar Bank with three drive-through lanes on the southeast corner of Grand River Avenue and Washington Heights Avenue

**Commissioner Ianni moved [and read into the record] NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF MERIDIAN hereby approves Special Use Permit #13151 subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Approval of the Flagstar Bank branch with three drive-through lanes is based on application materials submitted by Michael A. Boggio, AIA; and a site plan, floor plan, exterior elevations, landscape plantings and plant material list received by the Township on October 24, 2013 and preliminary grading and utility plans received by the Township on December 4, 2013, subject to revisions as required.**
- 2. The applicant shall obtain all applicable permits, licenses, and approvals from the Michigan Department of Transportation, Ingham County Road Department, Ingham County Drain Commissioner and the Township prior to any work taking place on the site. Copies of all permits, licenses, and approvals shall be submitted to the Department of Community Planning and Development.**
- 3. Final utility plans for the site are subject to approval of the Director of Public Works and Engineering and shall be in accordance with the Township Engineering Design and Construction Standards.**
- 4. The applicant shall prepare and submit a traffic impact study for review by the Township traffic consultant. Revisions to the site plan may be necessary to incorporate recommendations prior to site plan review approval.**
- 5. Existing trees located along the site's Washington Heights frontage may be incorporated into the landscape plan during site plan review if feasible and practical. Where new landscaping, including street trees, is proposed, it shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development, the Ingham County Road Department, and Michigan Department of Transportation, as applicable.**
- 6. Site accessories such as exterior lighting fixtures for streets and buildings, and bicycle racks shall be of commercial quality, and complement the building design and style. Final design and location shall be subject to the approval of the Director of Community Planning and Development.**
- 7. Buried construction or other materials and debris found anywhere on the 3.74 acre site, and debris resulting from clearing, grading, or construction activities related to the proposed project shall be removed from the site and be properly disposed.**
- 8. Any future building additions or expansions to the buildings will require modification to the Special Use Permit #13151.**
- 9. A concrete sidewalk a minimum of five (5) feet in width shall be installed along the site's Washington Heights Avenue frontage. The construction and installation of the sidewalks shall be in accordance with the Township's Engineering Design and Construction Standards.**

**10. A copy of information that exists on computer for the project and construction plans shall be provided to the Director of Public Works and Engineering in an AutoCAD compatible format.**

**Seconded by Commissioner Honicky.**

Planning Commission discussion:

- Condition included in the resolution will address traffic concerns
- Banks with drive-through lanes addresses the changing demographics of the community

ROLL CALL VOTE: YEAS: Commissioners Cordill, Deits, Hildebrandt, Honicky, Ianni, Norkin, Salehi, Scott-Craig, Chair Jackson

NAYS: None

Motion carried unanimously.

**8. Other Business (None)**

**9. Township Board, Planning Commission officer, committee chair, and staff comment or reports**

Commissioner Hildebrandt spoke to the need to incorporate ideas into Township ordinances which resulted from the design charette. She elucidated her appreciation to Commissioner Norkin for his service on the Planning Commission.

**10. New applications**

- A. Zoning Amendment #14010 (Meridian Township), request to amend the zoning ordinance to establish definitions and standards for the medical use of marihuana

**11. Site plans received (None)**

**12. Site plans approved (None)**

**13. Public remarks**

Chair Jackson opened public remarks.

David Strobl, 1320 Cove Court, Okemos, indicated he researched the history of the property proposed for the new central fire station and was told it was originally intended for a Township library with walking trails and park areas. He summarized the review criteria as it related to the request for SUP #13121 and spoke to the negative health impact the proposed fire station will have on Autumn Park Condominium owners.

Chair Jackson closed public remarks.

**14. Adjournment**

Chair Jackson adjourned the regular meeting at 10:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra K. Otto  
Recording Secretary